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Secondary State Formation and the Development of Local Identity: Change and Continuity in the State of Qin (770–221 B.C.)

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In his seminal essay “Ancient China and its Anthropological Significance” the late K. C. Chang (1989) first voiced the view that the trajectory leading to the development of state in China and, as a consequence, the Chinese state itself, are fundamentally different from the accepted Western model of state formation and operation. Chang argued that while the Western trajectory is one of “rupture” – a wholesale replacement of a family-based society with new social, legal, and religious systems of the state – in China the process is characterized by continuity of familial institutions and belief systems that were incorporated into the fundamental structure of the state.

Chang’s once provocative claim that China (and by extension all East Asian cultures) should serve as a source for a new theoretical model has recently become almost the paradigm among archaeologists of China (e.g. Liu Li 2000; Underhill 2002; Yates 1997). This development is in no small part a reaction against the common practice to exclude the civilizations of East Asia from discussions of state formation. While in the past research on Chinese states and complex societies did inspire the development of general models (e.g. Lattimore 1940; Wheatley 1971; Wittfogel 1957), in those early models Asiatic states were commonly used as the significant other which defined the more advanced and democratic European states (Morrison 1994:184–5). Today, while the formation of pristine states in China is recognized by most scholars, it has become common to omit China altogether from comparative studies (e.g. Feinman and Marcus 1998; see also Morrison’s discussion [1994]). It is against this background that we want to propose our study, with the hope of reintroducing China into the general comparativist discourse.

We wholeheartedly embrace Chang’s and Morrison’s idea that detailed studies of the rich archaeological, epigraphic, and historic data from China can serve to

test existing models as well as to formulate new models that can be applied to other case studies. However, our ongoing research into the formation of the Qin state (秦, ca. 770–221 B.C.) leads us to reject (at least for this specific trajectory) Chang’s “continuity” model. Our case study suggests, on the contrary, that during the middle to late Zhanguo period (戰國, “Warring States,” 453–221 B.C.) the Qin polity underwent comprehensive changes in its structure and in all walks of its life, and that these changes effectively put an end to most archaic features, supplementing them with surprisingly “modern” looking traits, which resemble in many important aspects early modern European states. We believe furthermore that research on the ways such traits were developed, manipulated and combined is fundamental not only for understanding Qin’s history but also for purposes of comparison.

We are aware that the trajectory of the Qin is but one of many in ancient China and that different types of states rose and fell in the broader area of East Asia. Rather than attempting to overview all the different trajectories – a task which would have required the entire volume if not more – we decided to focus on one case. Though Qin is not the earliest state in China it is uniquely important, because in the year 221 B.C. it had conquered the entire Chinese world, establishing the first unified empire. While the Qin dynasty lasted for less than fifteen years, its institutions, rites, and functioning norms continued to influence subsequent dynasties for the next two millennia. Moreover, the model of the Qin, modified later by the Han dynasty (漢, 206 B.C.–A.D. 220) and its successors, had profound influence on many of the states that emerged in other parts of East and Southeast Asia.

From a methodological standpoint, Qin is an ideal case study. Rarely does a researcher have in his or her disposal such rich and varied sources to address the process of state formation. Our attempt to synthesize archaeological data, recently discovered epigraphic sources, and traditional (received) texts has been by itself an interesting methodological exercise. Our results, we believe, can be helpful for scholars working in areas that lack such abundance of written sources. Using variety of sources to address issues of identity formation, particularly analyzing how the members of a group manipulated artifacts and texts to project a new internal and external image of their group, can, as recently pointed by Meskell (2002:280–1), revitalize the field of archaeology and make it more relevant to other academic disciplines and to the general public.

Background: Early Chinese States as a Research Dilemma

The origins of the first state-level societies in the East Asian subcontinent are hotly debated among archaeologists in and outside China. As often happens, political agendas significantly influence these debates. Thus, the traditional identification of the Xia 夏 dynasty, supposedly located at the middle reaches of the Yellow River valley, as the earliest state in China, was used in the past to legitimize the imperial political system; and similar centralizing agendas may stand behind the recently loudly proclaimed Chinese government project to establish an “official chronology”

for the Xia and the subsequent Shang 商 and Zhou 周 dynasties (Lee 2002; Li Xueqin 2002), all of which were designated as the forbearers of the “Chinese civilization.”

Regardless of such political underpinnings, many serious archaeologists, regardless of whether they accept the historical reality of the Xia dynasty, favor the idea that a state level society was indeed established during the late third or early second millennium B.C. around the middle reaches of the Yellow River basin (Liu Li 1996; Underhill 2002:25). Some scholars place the earliest states in different regions and at earlier periods (Guo 1995), while others push the phenomenon forward to the middle of the second millennium B.C. (Allen 1984). In any case, most scholars agree that by the middle of the second millennium B.C., or during the Shang dynasty according to the Chinese terminology, an elaborate state system existed in the Yellow River basin and perhaps also elsewhere on the territory of China-to-be. However, the nature and extent of these early “Chinese” states is still subject to significant controversies. While some describe the Shang and the Zhou as extensive territorial empires with strong centralized governing systems, the minimalists consider these polities as conglomeration of “city-states” with a weak ruling apparatus having limited control over the hinterland (Shaughnessy 1989; Trigger 1999; Yates 1997).

That the earliest states in East Asia elude clear definition may derive not only from lack of data, but also from the more general problem of the inadequacy of the extant definitions, based as they are on the Occidental experience. For example, while Shang bronze production, most of it in state sponsored workshops, far exceeds anything known from elsewhere in the ancient world (Bagley 1999:137), its political system appears to be insufficiently institutionalized and poorly integrated (Keightley 1999:290). Such apparent contradiction between the strengths and weaknesses of the early Chinese political systems, mirrored in other cases, indicates that the current definitions may be misleading when dealing with the early states in East Asia; a new approach, based on the East Asian experience, may be more appropriate. To develop such an approach we need to focus on specific issues related to political organization, administrative mechanisms, kinship relations and legitimization ideology (Trigger 1999), whether via new archaeological data or improved analysis of extant data.

In this chapter we will not address the early states of the second or the early first millennium B.C. but the second phase of state development, during the second half of the first millennium B.C., when large territorial states emerged in China, eventually giving birth to the Chinese empire. While secondary formations and the evolution of state society is perhaps a less prestigious topic of research than that of the pristine states, it poses fundamental and equally interesting questions. How did the breakdown of a complex state system and the construction of a new one occur? (Baines and Yoffee 1998:256–8; Tainter 1988). What happened during the periods of disintegration: were elements of the old system recombined in the new one, and if so, which elements, and how were they combined? (Van Buren and Richards 2000:4). Is this “secondary” formation an evolution of the old system or a revolution that created a new form of state? (Van Buren and Richards 2000). How does such change affect the rise of new social strata, and how in turn is it affected by it?

(Joyce et al. 2001). What kind of ideology is developed to facilitate and naturalize the sociopolitical changes, and does the ideology itself become an agent of change? (Demarest 1992; Van Buren 2000). Our analysis of processes in the state of Qin addresses some of those issues and suggests ways in which we can advance our concrete and theoretical understanding.

Early Qin: A Zhou Polity

While state-level societies existed in the basins of the Yellow and the Yangzi Rivers at least from the second millennium B.C. prior to 221 B.C. the region was never fully unified. During most of the first millennium B.C. it was nominally ruled by the Zhou house but in reality divided among a number of more or less independent polities. The state of Qin occupied the northwestern corner of the Zhou world, and in the eighth century B.C., following the collapse of the Zhou rule in the Wei river basin, it moved into the lands of the former royal domain. It is from this point of Qin's history that our discussion will begin (Figure 10.1).

As a departure point for our discussion we focus on the much debated topic of Qin ethnic identity and Qin's relations with the rest of the Zhou (i.e. "Chinese") world. This debate began in the 1930s when scholars have suggested that Qin was ethnically and culturally alien to the ancient Xia (also "Chinese") and that it was absorbed into Zhou civilization only on the eve of the imperial unification (Bodde 1938; Meng Wentong 1936; cf. Liu Yutao 1988). This paradigm was based on several passages in Sima Qian's (司馬遷, ca. 145–90 B.C.) *Shiji* (史記, "Historical Records"), which refer to Qin's similarity to the Rong 戎 and the Di 狄 "barbarians" (Shiji 1997 5:202; 15:685; 68:2234). Later as archaeological and epigraphic discoveries highlighted strong similarities between Qin and Zhou since the earliest stages of Qin history scholars began rejecting the old paradigm, as a result of which the once "barbarian" and remote polity is conceived nowadays as a state which "preserved the practices and inherent values of the Zhou ritual legacy with at least the same eagerness as their eastern neighbors did" (Kern 2000:63; cf. von Falkenhausen 2004 and n.d.).

For many scholars today the textual and archaeological data of Qin history seem to be irreconcilable. We believe, however, that this apparent contradiction between different sources can be resolved if we take into account that Qin identity was not a fixed entity, but one which developed and changed in response to domestic and foreign social and political processes and could be manipulated by the ruling elite. Being a social construct, collective identities, as many recent archaeological studies stressed, are much more fluid and interchangeable than previously assumed (Meskell 2002). Individuals have more than one identity and they change them through their life cycles. Moreover, individuals have different "social skins" which they can put on in different social interactions (Fisher and DiPaolo-Loren 2003). Group identity, so much is it can be identified by analysis of patterns of material remains, is also a social construct (cf. Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995). Such a construct is commonly promoted by the elite to legitimize and maintain their prefer-

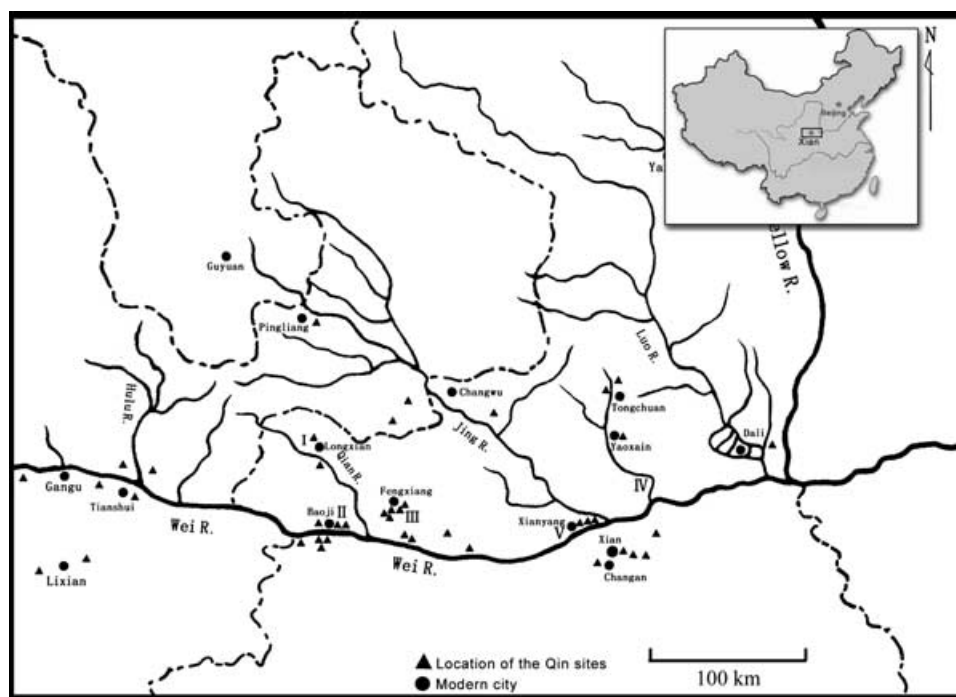


Figure 10.1 Location of Qin capital cities and archaeological sites mentioned in chapter (used with permission from Teng Mingyu). I. Qianwei; II. Pingyang; III. Yongcheng; IV. Yueyang; V. Xianyang

ential position vis-à-vis the rest of the population (Baines and Yoffee 1998) but it can also serve to enable social negotiation among different strata and regional tradition and naturalize sociopolitical changes (Joyce et al. 2001; Van Buren 2000; Van Buren and Richards 2000:10).

Our study suggests that shifts in the image of Qin in the eyes of its eastern neighbors and in its self-identification are intrinsically linked to the creation of a new type of state during the mid-fourth century B.C. This assumption of dynamic change in Qin identity allows us to elucidate several peculiar aspects of Qin state formation, and raise more broad issues concerning both state building and identity definitions in ancient China and elsewhere. Our study further elucidates the importance of interactions among sociopolitical strata within the political unit and with competing polities from the outside as a factor behind social, political, and economic change.

The archaeological data we use to address the development of the Qin state is far from being complete. Systematic regional surveys have yet to be carried out in this region of China and only a few habitation sites were excavated. Moreover, existing data reflects almost exclusively the life and mortuary rites of the nobles and of the unranked members of aristocratic lineages. This is partly due to a research strat-

egy that focused on the excavation of rich graves and large structures, but, more substantially, this research bias reflects the very basic reality of pre-Zhanguo Qin (and Zhou) society. Prior to the fourth century B.C. members of aristocratic lineages possessed their own residential area and lineage cemeteries, while the commoners remained politically and culturally invisible, leaving few identifiable material remains. These lower strata were not supposed to participate in the ancestral cult and other rites, were militarily inactive, and in all likelihood politically silent (von Falkenhausen n.d.). The state was almost exclusively associated with the dominant elite families. This situation is akin to Baines and Yoffee's (1998:240) model, in which the sociopolitical elite creates a high culture that not only serves to legitimate its prestigious position but almost completely excludes other strata from participation in state affairs. However, in the case of the Qin this situation changed dramatically during the fourth century B.C. when, as we shall show, members of the lower strata entered the sociopolitical arena of the state and the resultant impact of their previously invisible tradition became instrumental in changing the "high culture" of the elite.

In what follows we shall compare aspects of material culture and mortuary practices of Qin elite members with those of their peers from the core Zhou states to the east. We presuppose the existence of the materially identifiable common Zhou ritual culture (von Falkenhausen n.d.; Yin Qun 2001) to which we shall compare Qin cultural traits. The goal of comparison is first to discern the degree of uniqueness of Qin culture within the Zhou world and second, to trace cultural changes in Qin during the period under discussion and their connections to the changes in the nature of the state of Qin.

Our comparison will begin with the capital – a ritual center of the state where the ruling lineage resided and maintained its ancestral temples. As is the case with many other contemporary states, Qin occasionally relocated its capital city. Altogether historical records mention six relocations, each time further to the east (Shiji 1997 5:177–203). We know almost nothing about the first three capitals (Qianyi 沂邑 [776–762 B.C.], Qianwei 沂渭 [762–714 B.C.], and Pingyang 平陽 [714–677 B.C.]), but rich historical and archaeological data is available for the last three: Yongcheng (雍城 677–383 B.C.), Yueyang (櫟陽 383–350 B.C.), and Xianyang (咸陽 350–207 B.C.). Among these three, Yongcheng, which was the capital of Qin for most of its earliest history, is archaeologically the best known. Its remains have been identified at Majiazhuang 馬家莊, in Fengxiang 鳳翔 county, Shaanxi. The city, an imperfect rectangular of about 10 kilometers square, was surrounded by 15 meter-wide walls and ditches 5.2 meters deep and 12.5–25 meters wide (Li Zizhi 1998). Its size and the size of its defensive installations are comparable with other contemporaneous capitals of large polities; actually, Yongcheng, and the next capital, Yueyang, which is estimated to occupy only 6 kilometers square (Wang and Liang 2001), are smaller than such capitals as Linzi 臨淄 of Qi 齊, or Xiadu 下都 of Yan 燕 in the northeast (Li Zizhi 1998:615; Steinhardt 1990:48–9). Yongcheng's defensive installations are dwarfed by the walls of Xinzheng 新鄭, the capital of the states of Zheng 鄭 and later of Han 韓 in Henan, which are as wide as 60 meters, i.e. four times wider than those of Yongcheng (Li Zizhi 1998:21).

The layout of Yongcheng seems to be much less centralized than that of other Chunqiu (春秋, 722–453 B.C.) and Zhanguo capitals. At Yongcheng, remains of palaces and public buildings, such as stamped-earth foundations and bronze fittings for the wooden constructions, have been found over a large area (Li Zizhi 1998; von Falkenhausen 1999), which suggests that the city did not have a single palatial center but rather several clusters of public buildings in different parts of the large walled enclosure. In the capitals of other contemporary states, such as Xiadu and Linzi, political and ritualistic centers were usually much more visible being separated from the rest of the city by walls and a moat (Chen 1994). Thus both the size and layout of Yongcheng, and the lesser-known Yueyang, suggest a relatively conservative and modest approach.

Some of the identifiable buildings within Yongcheng's walls demonstrate Qin's adherence to Zhou ritual norms. For example, ancestral cult, the hallmark of the Zhou ritual system, seems to receive much emphasis. Compound no. 1 at Majiazhuang, dated to the late Chunqiu period, is probably the best example of an ancestral worship center known throughout China. Its layout is symmetrical with a large gatehouse in the south; a large walled enclosure measuring 30 meters by 34.5 meters. Inside this enclosure three more or less identical buildings, constructed of wood with tile-covered roofs and raised on low stamped-earth platforms, face a central court in which rows of sacrificial pits are aligned (von Falkenhausen 1999:459; Teng 2002:66–72; Wang and Liang 2001:134–6). These three separate temples are, if anything, less than the number of temples which an overlord was allowed to have under the Zhou code (Wang and Liang 2001:136). Although no comparable ancestral temples of the Western Zhou or the Chunqiu periods are known, the building techniques and the symmetrical arrangement of this complex with its southern entrance is clearly in line with the Zhou tradition.

Nearby is Compound no. 3 in Majiazhuang, which archaeologists have identified as a palace. It is also modest in size and traditional in its arrangement. It contains a succession of five enclosed courtyards arranged from south to north with a total length of 326.5 meters, its width ranging from 86 meters to 60 meters. The main buildings seem to have been constructed at the innermost northern courtyard (Wang and Liang 2001:137). According to Wu Hung (1999:669) this compound and the buildings it housed are typical of the introverted, "two-dimensional and self-contained" style of the Zhou. Thus, like Compound no. 1, the layout and architecture of Compound no. 3 reflect traditional attitudes and esthetic values.

We shall turn later to the last Qin capital, Xianyang, but first let us analyze the graves and mortuary complexes of early Qin rulers. The size and furnishing of these are clearly at odds with the modest and conservative outlook of early Qin capitals. Even the earliest tombs of Qin lords indicate considerable extravagance. The eighth-century B.C. tomb of the Qin lord in Dabuzi 大堡子, Li 禮 county, Gansu, marked as M2, has two tomb passages attached to it from the east and west. The eastern passage is 38 meters long and 6 meters wide. The tomb chamber itself is approximately 12 meters by 12 meters at its mouth and 15 meters deep. Attached to this grave are two pits each containing 4 chariots and 12 horses (Dai 2000). There is reason to believe that the ritual furnishing of the Dabuzi grave greatly exceeded the

mortuary rights of the Qin lord. The tomb was badly looted in the 1980s, but Li Chaoyuan (1996:32) estimates that no less than one hundred bronze ritual vessels from this tomb appeared on the Hong Kong antiquities market, a number which by far exceeds that assigned by sumptuary rules to the overlords. In comparison, the largest grave at the roughly contemporaneous cemetery of the Guo 虢 lineage at Shangcunling 上村陵 (Sanmenxia 三門峽, Henan province) has no tomb passage, is 6 meters by 4 meters in size and 10 meters deep and contains only 57 bronze vessels (von Falkenhausen 1999:471–3; Li Xueqin 1985:80–4).

The Dabuzi tomb is dwarfed in turn by the later burials of Qin rulers from the Nanzhihui 南指揮 necropolis at Fengxiang county, Shaanxi. This cemetery covers an area of more than 20 square kilometers and contains 13 clusters; most of them are walled and each comprises several large and medium size tombs accompanied by sacrificial pits that contain horses and chariots. Altogether 42 tombs have been identified, among them eighteen with two tomb passages, identified as the tombs of Qin rulers from the period of the capital's location at Yongcheng (Teng 2002:55–7). The only large grave so far excavated in this cemetery is M1, identified as the burial of Lord Jing (秦景公, r. 576–37 B.C.). As in the other tombs of similar shape in Nanzhihui the two sloping tomb passages leading to the bottom of the tomb are from the east and the west. The eastern passage is 156 meters long and the western 85 meters long. The burial chamber itself is 60 meters long (from east to west), 40 meters wide and 24 meters deep. The grave was looted in antiquity so its ritual set of bronze vessels and other precious grave goods were not found. However, findings such as the inscribed fragments of chime-stones, 166 human victims each placed in his own coffin, as well as the huge wooden beams used to construct the burial chamber and evidence for a wooden structure which was built above ground (Teng 2002:57), all suggest an extraordinarily rich burial.

The scale of Qin rulers' tombs seems to support von Falkenhausen's (1999:486) observation that it "may well constitute an infraction, in spirit if not in letter, of the sumptuary privileges due to the rulers of a polity." We should remember however that heretofore no tomb of Zhou kings has been found, and that few if any graves of major Chunqiu rulers have been excavated. Tomb no. 5 at Heyatou 河崖頭, although badly looted, is believed to be that of a late Chunqiu lord of Qi. It has only one tomb passage and it is smaller than M1 at Nanzhihui. Even so, huge mortuary consumption is evident here, for the main chamber is surrounded by horse pits, which contain the carcasses of more than 600 horses (von Falkenhausen 1999:502). We still lack an appropriate comparative perspective, but there is no doubt that the lavish burials of Qin rulers and their unique features, such as the east–west orientation instead of the normative Zhou orientation along the south–north axis, challenge the image of a humble and traditional-minded state, as our discussion of Qin capitals suggested.

Epigraphic evidence further demonstrates the conceit of Qin lords. Inscriptions on bronze vessels and chime-stones cast on behalf of Qin rulers from Lord Wu (秦武公, r. 697–78) to Lord Jing proudly state that the founders of the state of Qin received Heaven's mandate (Tian ming 天命), and that the Qin lords rule their state in the name of Heaven (Kern 2000:59–105). This invocation of Heaven's mandate

is entirely unparalleled among other Chunqiu rulers (Pines 2002a:57–70), and coupled with other unique ritual activities of the Qin lords, such as worship of Di 帝, the highest god of the Zhou pantheon, it strongly suggests that the Qin rulers considered themselves as ritual peers of the Zhou kings if not their legitimate heirs (Zang 2001).

Remarkably, this aggrandizing tendency of the early Qin rulers and their air of superiority has gone unnoticed by later historians, including such staunch critics of Qin as Sima Qian or Jia Yi (賈誼, 200–168 B.C.). Perhaps the ritual language of self-aggrandizement was designed for a limited circle of Qin top leaders, and was not employed in Qin's contacts with the rest of the Zhou world or in Qin historical records. This careful interplay between the relatively humble capital and the lavish burial sites indicates the Qin rulers' mastery of the subtleties of ritual discourse – a common language of the Zhou nobility. Rather than confirming Qin's "barbarian" image, its rulers' burials indicate the versatility of its elite in the niceties of the Zhou culture and suggest its belonging to the Zhou ritual milieu.

Mortuary data from the Qin nobility graves similarly indicate the adherence of the Qin elite to the aristocratic tradition of the Zhou, along with certain independent traits. Our systematic analysis of more than 600 Qin graves from the eighth–third centuries B.C. enables us to discern gradual changes in the Qin elite's adherence to the Zhou rules and the appearance of new cultural traits in the state of Qin. Moreover, this analysis allows us to trace the differences in dissemination of new cultural traits among different social strata.

One of the hallmarks of the Zhou mortuary tradition is a sumptuary system known as *lie ding* (列鼎), in which the number and types of bronze vessels to be buried with the deceased was strictly prescribed according to rank. Though scholars are still debating details of the numerical composition of these ritual sets (cf. Hsu and Linduff 1988:173–7; Li Xueqin 1985:460–3; Liu Mingke 2001; Yin 2001:185–7), it is clear that their main components were an odd number of *ding* 鼎 (meat-offering tripods) and an even number of *gui* (簋, grain-offering tureens). Thus, Zhou kings should have, according to this system, nine *ding* and eight *gui*, the overlords (*zhuhou* 諸侯) seven *ding* and six *gui*, the high-ranking nobles (*qing dafu* 卿大夫) five *ding* and four *gui* and so forth, downscaling according to the rank of the deceased. The actual numbers of vessels allowed to each stratum may have changed by the beginning of the Chunqiu period (Yin 2001:202–12), but the strict gradation remained intact.

Several scholars (e.g. Liu Junshe 2000) have argued that the analysis of bronze assemblages from Chunqiu and early Zhanguo Qin elite graves suggests that Qin nobility strictly adhered to the *lie ding* sumptuary system. The actual picture is, however, more complex, mainly because very few intact graves of middle and upper nobility had been excavated (Table 10.1). Among the five early Chunqiu (period 4) graves with ritual sets, four were excavated at the Bianjiazhuang 邊家莊 cemetery in Long 隴 county, near the supposed location of the first Qin capital, Qianyi. The ritual sets excavated from these graves are indeed in accordance with Zhou sumptuary rules. Yet already in the mid-Chunqiu (period 5), i.e. by the mid-seventh century B.C., we observe a less rigid usage of the numbered sets. For example, graves

Table 10.1. Qin graves containing bronze ritual vessels (based on data from Teng 2002)

Area	Period	Bronze ding	Bronze gui	Other ritual bronzes	Ceramic mingqi
Chang Long	4	5	4	4	0
Chang Long	4	5	4	4	0
Chang Long	4	5	4	0	0
Bao Ji	4	3	2	4	0
Chang Long	4	3	0	1	0
Bao Ji	5	3	4	4	0
Bao Ji	5	3	4	4	0
Bao Ji	5	3	2	7	0
Bao Ji	5	3	1	3	0
Bao Ji	5	3	0	2	0
Bao Ji	5	2	0	2	0
Chang Long	5	1	0	1	2
Bao Ji	6	3	0	3	4
Bao Ji	7	3	0	1	7
Xi An	7	2	2	7	0
Bao Ji	7	2	0	6	8
Bao Ji	7	1	0	4	10
Bao Ji	8	3	0	8	0
Xi An	8	3	0	8	0
Bao Ji	8	3	0	7	2
Bao Ji	8	1	0	4	0
Bao Ji	8	1	0	3	0
Bao Ji	8	1	0	2	0
Tong Chuan	9	2	1	4	0
Xi An	9	2	0	3	0
Bao Ji	9	1	0	11	0
Chang Long	9	1	0	2	0
Da Li	9	1	0	2	0
Xi An	9	1	0	1	3
Da Li	9	1	0	1	2
Tian Shui	10	2	0	0	2
Bao Ji	10	1	0	4	0
Bao Ji	10	1	0	2	0
Bao Ji	10	1	0	1	0

M1 and M2 from the Yangping Qinjiagou 陽平秦家溝 cemetery in the Baoji 寶雞 region yield sets of three ding and four gui. It is interesting to note that such numerical transgressions exist even in sets in which real bronze vessels are replaced by ceramic imitations (*mingqi* 明器) (Teng 1992:292). This suggests that violations of the Zhou code became increasingly common among middle and low Qin nobility. However, because no grave of a high-ranking Qin noble has been excavated it is impossible to reach firm conclusions.

Even if Qin nobility were lenient with regard to Zhou sumptuary rules the shapes of Qin's ritual vessels suggest a relatively conservative attitude. While in the states of the Central Plain *gui* vessels had been largely replaced, by the mid-Chunqiu period, by *dui* 敦 or *cheng* 盛 and later by *dou* 豆 vessels (Yin 2001), at Qin graves *gui* vessels – both bronze originals and ceramic *mingqi* – figure prominently well into the Zhanguo period, and disappear only when the entire set of ritual bronze vessels is abandoned (Teng 1992). Moreover, most of the Qin bronze vessel types preserved the Western Zhou shapes long after these were modified in other states (von Falkenhausen 1999:489–93).

After the mid-Chunqiu period, ritual sets become less rigid than before, with almost no grave from period 6 onward containing the prescribed number of *ding* and *gui* bronzes (Table 10.1). In certain cases, however, the lacking bronze vessels are substituted by *mingqi* imitations to make up the complete ritual set. For example, the set excavated from grave M10 at the Fengxiang Gaozhuang 鳳翔高莊 cemetery in the Baoji region contains three bronze *ding* vessels and five other bronze ritual vessels, but no bronze *gui*. However, it does contain two ceramic *gui* imitations (*mingqi*) (Teng 2002:164), which complete the prescribed ritual set.

A systematic survey of all the ritualistic artifacts, bronze vessels, and their ceramic *mingqi* imitations excavated from 626 Qin graves suggests that there was a rapid replacement of real ritual vessels with ceramic imitations in the burials of Qin middle and low aristocracy. Already by the mid Chunqiu period *mingqi* ceramic outnumber bronze vessels, and by the late Chunqiu ritualistic vessels sets are predominantly made up from *mingqi* (Figure 10.2A). This extensive usage of the *mingqi* may indicate either attempts by low-ranking aristocrats to preserve the image of ritual propriety at a lower cost, or, alternatively, introduction of new ideas regarding the afterlife and the separation between the realm of the dead and that of the living (von Falkenhausen 2004). The extensive usage of *mingqi* in Qin predates the eastern states (von Falkenhausen 1999:493), which suggests that while the Qin elite was relatively conservative in their preference of vessel shapes they were innovative in their choice of raw materials and in the quality of the vessels.

The turning point in the furnishing of Qin tombs seems to be the mid-Zhanguo (period 8) when the importance of ritual vessels, both bronze and *mingqi*, rapidly declines. This swift abandonment of the vessels that for centuries had been the hallmark of the aristocratic status indicates beyond doubt sweeping changes in the system of social gradation. Other aspects of the Qin funerary data, surveyed below, also suggest a significant change during the middle and late Zhanguo period.

To show this we shall focus now on unique characteristics of Qin graves. While scholars are still debating what constitute the core elements of Qin culture, and how such elements are related to the Zhou cultural realm (von Falkenhausen 2004; Huang 1991; Liu Mingke 2001; Teng 1993; 2001), they generally identify the following indigenous characteristics of Qin burials: (1) East–west orientation of graves, as opposed to south–north orientation common during the Western Zhou and among the eastern states thereafter; (2) The so-called “flexed burial” as opposed to the extended supine posture of the deceased body common in other states; (3) Small pointed tablets of stone, known as *gui* 圭 are commonly found at Qin graves and

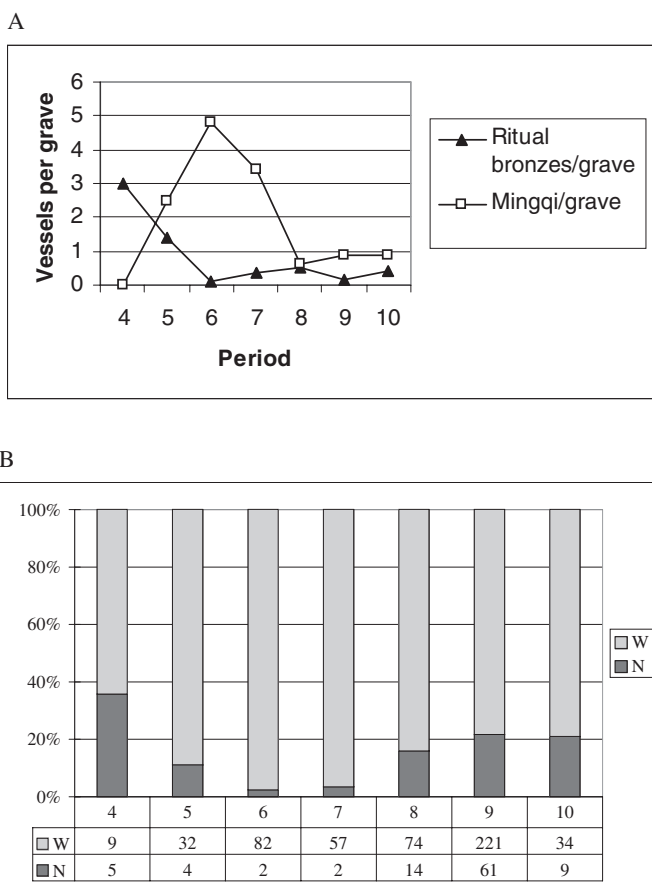


Figure 10.2A and B. A. Average number of ritual bronzes and ceramic *mingqi* in Qin graves of different periods. B. Orientation of Qin graves (W = west–east orientation; N = north–south orientation)

not elsewhere; (4) Catacomb burial, where the deceased is placed in a horizontal chamber adjacent to a vertical shaft, as opposed to a pit (vertical) grave. As a working hypothesis we accepted those traits as markers of Qin local identity and used the sample of 626 Qin graves tabulated by Teng Mingyu (2002:153–82) to analyze the patterns of their distribution during different phases of the Eastern Zhou.

Figure 10.2B clearly shows that during the Chunqiu-Zhanguo period east–west was the dominant orientation of Qin graves. Such orientation is shared by all social strata including the rulers and higher elite members, buried at the Nanzhihui necropolis (Wang and Liang 2001:65–70). It is interesting to note that the proportion of east–west graves reached its peak during the late Chunqiu and early Zhanguo periods (periods 6 and 7) while from the mid-Zhanguo period the number

of the south–north oriented graves increases significantly to almost 20 percent of the total. This change is part of an overall drastic process, which occurs in period 8, marking greater diversification of the Qin culture.

The mid-Zhanguo changes are similarly observable in the distribution of flexed and extended body posture. Both the westward orientation and even more the flexed body posture are burial customs that were widespread in Gansu province and areas further to the north and west (Huang 1991). The paucity of such burials in the core areas of the Shang and Western Zhou cultures – including in the Western Zhou royal domain later occupied by Qin – strongly suggests an indigenous influence. Like grave orientation, the dominance of flexed burial peaked during the late Chunqiu–early Zhanguo (periods 6–7), and then decreased – though still remaining the most common burial method – during the mid and late Zhanguo (periods 8–9) (Figure 10.3A).

It has been suggested that flexed body position is an attribute of low status (Liu Junshe 2000), but this supposition is not supported by our data. As Figure 10.3B shows, while the extended posture is more common in largest and richest graves (type A according to Teng 2002:19), more than one half of these graves, including some of the richest graves in our sample, contained flexed bodies. While so far we have no information of the burial posture of the Qin rulers and the highest elite, the data currently available suggest that the preference for flexed burial was shared by all strata of Qin society.

Analysis of the use of the two types of graves – vertical pit graves and horizontal catacomb graves – shows a very different pattern. Although catacomb burials are known in northwest China from an early period, our sample of Qin graves shows that in the state of Qin the use of catacomb graves started only during the middle Zhanguo period (period 8) rapidly reaching its zenith by the late Zhanguo (period 9) (Figure 10.3C). As already pointed out by Teng Mingyu (1993), the common use of catacomb graves by the Qin population is a relatively late phenomenon which is associated with change in other cultural and mortuary practices that occurred during the middle and most notably late Zhanguo period. Similar to the flexed posture, catacomb burials are more common among poor graves (C type in Teng 2002:19) but exist also among the richest graves (A type).

The novelty of late Zhanguo Qin graves is paralleled in the structure of the last Qin capital, Xianyang, which was built in 350 B.C. and served as the imperial capital until the end of Qin dynasty in 207 B.C. The overall layout of Xianyang is still unclear although several large palatial buildings were excavated (Shaanxi 2003; Zhao and Gao 2001). City walls have not been identified and it is unclear whether, as some archaeologists argue, Xianyang was more centrist in its organization than Yongcheng (Li Zizhi 1998).

The most salient features of the archaeological remains of Xianyang are monumental palaces built around tall stamped-earth cores. While not true multistory architecture, such “terrace pavilions,” which towered above the city skyline, were impressive monuments to the power of the Qin kings. For example, Building no. 1, one of several palatial foundations found on the northern bank of the Wei river, was constructed around a core extending 60 meters from east to west and 45 meters

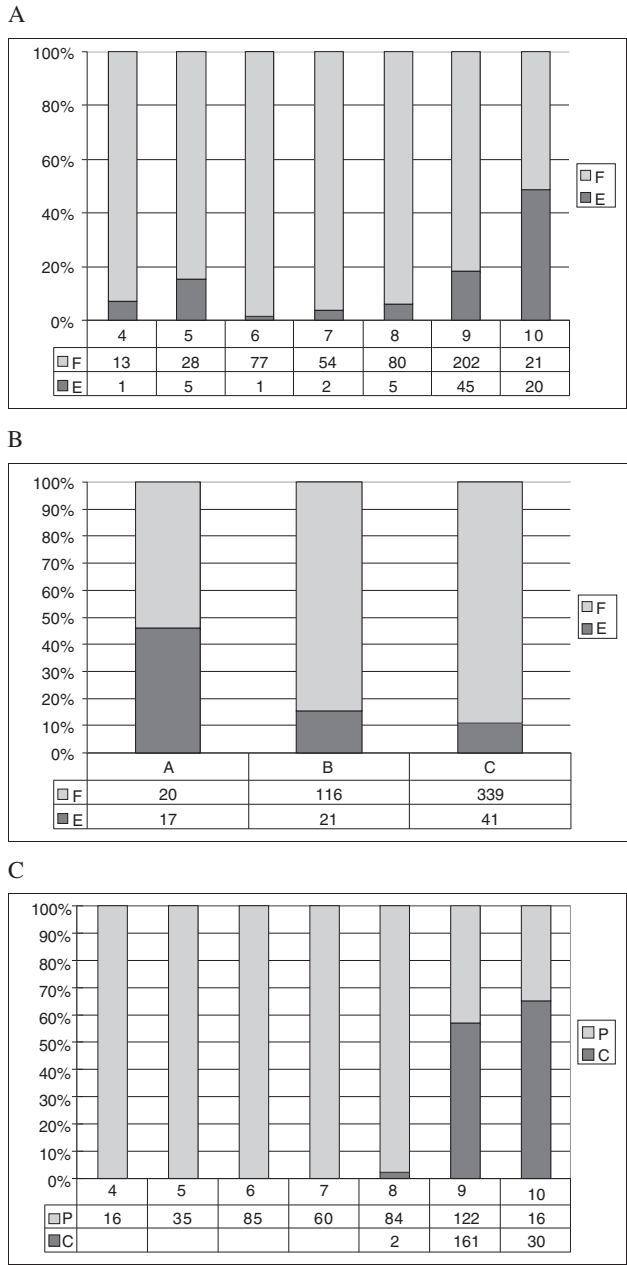


Figure 10.3 A, B, and C. A. Proportion of body posture at Qin graves (F = flexed posture; E = extended posture). B. Proportion of body posture at different type of graves. C. Proportion of pit and catacomb graves (P = pit graves; C = catacomb graves). Periods: 4 = Early Chunqiu (ca. 770–650 B.C.); 5 = Middle Chunqiu (650–560 B.C.); 6 = Late Chunqiu and transition to the Zhanguo (560–470 B.C.); 7 = Early Zhanguo (470–380 B.C.); 8 = Middle Zhanguo (380–290 B.C.); 9 = Late Zhanguo and Qin (290–207 B.C.); 10 = Early Han (206–118 B.C.). All the charts are based on data from Teng 2002: 153–82

from south to north (Shaanxi 2003:283–356; Zhao and Gao 2001:8). Archaeologists reconstruct it as a three tiered building that stood 17 meters high (Wang and Liang 2001:71). Such tall buildings represent a transition in esthetic values from the “two-dimensional” and self-contained tradition of the Western Zhou to the “three-dimensional” monumental style of the Zhanguo period (Wu 1999:665–75). Qin was relatively late to adopt this new style from its eastern neighbors, but once it did it apparently took it into a new level of monumentality.

In sum, the archaeological record presents a complex picture of Qin elite identity prior to the fourth century B.C. To understand the meaning of our data we must examine the way in which abstract concepts, such as identity, are “materialized:” to see what materials and methods were selected to transform ideas into a physical reality and which audience were they directed at (De Marrais et al. 1996). Because most of the aspects we were able to analyze, such as the funerary practices of the elite, public buildings, and epigraphic sources, are associated with formal display in the public arena, we assume that the identity we “see” is the one Qin rulers and elite wanted to project to themselves, to their subordinates and to the elite of the other states. This public image is far from being the “barbarous Other;” actually, Qin ruling elite displayed remarkable adherence to many aspects of the Western Zhou tradition, often observing it more closely than their peers from other Zhou states. While our data indicate manipulation of the Zhou sumptuary rules from the mid-Chunqiu period, this was not a unique Qin phenomenon but a process observable in the archaeological record of the eastern states as well (Yin Qun 2001:259–74). In few aspects of its material culture, such as the widespread replacement of bronze vessels with *mingqi*, Qin was more innovative than its neighbors, but the general picture prior to the mid-fourth century B.C. suggests that Qin ruling elite steadfastly adhered to many aspects of the Western Zhou tradition.

Throughout the Chunqiu and early Zhanguo periods Qin graves display remarkable continuity, possibly indicating the strong cultural homogeneity of the elite. During the fourth century B.C. (our period 8), however, a drastic change occurs when many attributes of the Zhou tradition were abandoned and new attributes appeared. This drastic change represents two seemingly contradictory processes: it seems that while the elite accepted during this period many traits associated with the local cultures that predate Qin in this region, such as catacomb graves, it was simultaneously also more open to interactions and cultural contacts with its eastern neighbors. Eastern traits, such as north–south orientation of graves, the use of tumuli at rulers’ graves and the type of royal buildings found at Xianyang are clear markers of eastern influence. Noteworthy, this is also a period when Qin cultural traits are more commonly found in the east (von Falkenhausen 2004).

The concomitant presence of indigenous and external influences suggests a period of lesser cultural homogeneity and greater external and internal openness. Whatever the reason for this change, it marked a significant break with the former path of development. As we shall see below, this rupture both reflected and effected deep changes both in Qin identity and in its image in the eyes of the rest of the Zhou world.

The Impact of Shang Yang's Reforms: Qin Against Tianxia

The rupture we observed in Qin material culture in the fourth century B.C. may be plausibly related to the overall reforms that occurred in that state during the reign of Lord Xiao (秦孝公, r. 361–338 B.C.) under the guidance of the brilliant reformer, Shang Yang (商鞅, d. 338 B.C.). While it is clear that some of the reforms attributed to Shang Yang were initiated either before or after his life-time, his overall impact on Qin's history is beyond doubt. His reforms have been extensively discussed elsewhere (Lewis 1999; Perelomov 1993; Yang 1998), and we shall not repeat these discussions here; suffice it to say that they had a major impact not only on the military and economic prowess of Qin, but also on its relations with the rest of the Zhou world.

There is little doubt that the major aim of the reforms was to consolidate and strengthen the state of Qin; yet they also had far-reaching consequences for Qin's cultural identity. Changes in social gradation which are partly reflected in the new mortuary practices discussed above undermined major aspects of the aristocratic culture that perpetuated the ties of Qin nobles to their peers in eastern states. While the demise of the aristocratic social order and the parallel decline of the ritual system, initially created by and for this order, were not unique to Qin, the speed and the comprehensiveness of Qin reforms are unparalleled elsewhere. Ranked aristocrats were a major source of cultural unity in the Zhou world (von Falkenhausen n.d.), and the disappearance of this stratum from Qin society meant that this state effectively placed itself outside the pale of the Zhou ritual culture, which was for many equivalent to the Zhou civilization.

Qin's departure from previous ritual norms was sweeping enough to enforce a new image of this state in late Zhanguo texts, the image that later became so pervasive in the Shiji. Prior to Shang Yang's reforms Qin was never treated as the Other. Early to mid-Zhanguo texts, such as the Zuo zhuan 左傳, Lunyu 論語, Mozi 墨子, Guoyu 國語, and Mengzi 孟子 rarely discuss Qin matters, but when they do, Qin is treated as a distant but not culturally distinct state. The situation changes suddenly in the late fourth century B.C. Contemporary texts abound with pejorative remarks about Qin which is either identified as the Yi 夷 "barbarians" (Chunqiu Gongyang 1991 22:2,319), or, more radically, as a state that "has common customs with the Rong and Di; a state with tiger's and wolf's heart; greedy, profit-seeking and untrustworthy, which knows nothing of ritual, propriety and virtuous behavior" (Zhanguo ce 1991 24.8:907). Some of the anti-Qin philippics go to the extreme of designating Qin as "the mortal enemy of All under Heaven (*tianxia* 天下)" (Zhanguo ce 1991 14.17:508), an outsider to the civilized world, the cultural Other which exists beyond "the pale of humanity" (Pines 2002c). While these statements may be dismissed as politically tendentious, the evidence suggests that they reflect a broader cultural trend. Curiously, even some Qin courtiers accepted the exclusion of their state from the civilized All under Heaven, which was treated as a mortal enemy to be invaded and annexed (Han Feizi 1998 1:2–3; Zhanguo ce 1991 3.5:88–91). Whatever is the

historical veracity of such statements attributed to Qin statesmen, they must have been formulated in accord with the argumentation acceptable at the court of Qin during the late Zhanguo period. As such they suggest that Qin accepted its unique position as a state beyond All under Heaven, and a singular enemy of tianxia.

Harsh rhetoric notwithstanding, Qin leaders did not opt for complete separation from the Zhou world. To the very end of the Zhanguo period the rulers of Qin continued to adhere to certain aspects of the Zhou legacy. Of particular importance was the maintenance of amicable relations with the Zhou house, which remained, despite its obvious weakness, the major source of inter-state legitimacy. Qin epigraphic sources, such as the so-called “clay document” (*wa shu* 瓦書) and the recently discovered prayer to Mountain Hua written on the jade tablets, testify beyond doubt to Qin’s ongoing respect to the Zhou kings (Pines In press). Qin official documents furthermore display continuous adherence to the Zhou written tradition, which was preserved in Qin even more than in the core Zhou states (Kern 2000). Similar conservatism is observable in Qin script, as “Qin was the most faithful in carrying on the writing tradition of the Zhou dynasty” (Qiu 2000:78). This preservation of political and cultural bridges with the Zhou world suggests that significant portions of the Qin ruling elite preferred cultural integration with rather than separation from their eastern neighbors. Qin rulers’ continuous enrolling of alien statesmen and thinkers to their court suggests their awareness of the need to preserve cultural bridges with the rest of the Zhou world.

The picture of Qin ties with the Zhou states as obtained from the traditional and recently discovered texts is therefore not monochromatic, and it may be plausibly assumed that conflicting views coexisted at the court of Qin with regard to its place within the Zhou world. It seems, however, that acute interstate conflict between Qin and its neighbors gradually strengthened the separatist tendency. Thus, by the late Zhanguo Qin elites reimagined the history of their state in a way that emphasized its otherness rather than its common roots with the Zhou; hence statements about Qin’s erstwhile “barbarianism” appear even in the texts associated with this state (e.g. Lüshi chunqiu 1990 24.1:1,584; Shiji 1997 87:2,544). These statements indicate that in the late Zhanguo period not only Qin’s image in the eyes of outsiders, but perhaps its own sense of identity had profoundly changed.

Qin’s estrangement from the eastern parts of the Zhou realm is further observable from its leaders’ reinterpretation of their relations to the Xia (i.e. the traditional “Chinese” world). While in the Chunqiu period Qin lords considered themselves to be part of the Xia and even its leaders (as in the bronze inscriptions discussed above), late Zhanguo Qin legal texts convey a different impression. Qin statutes unearthed in Shuihudi 睡虎地, Hubei, clearly indicate Qin’s self-differentiation from the Xia, who are arrogantly designated as vassal states (Hulsewe 1985:170; Shuihudi 2001:134); elsewhere Shuihudi documents pejoratively use the term “a Xia child” to designate “children born of a vassal state father and a Qin mother” (Hulsewe 1985:171; Pines In press; Shuihudi 2001:135). Clearly, late Zhanguo Qin officials distinguished their state from the Xia, which became a different entity, separated by location and by blood and not only by culture. The otherness of Qin in the late Zhanguo cultural landscape is therefore not a post-factum

Han construction, but an outcome of deep cultural and political processes apparently triggered by Shang Yang's reforms. The combination of archaeological data, epigraphy, and classical texts suggest that by the end of the Zhanguo period a new Qin identity appeared, and it was evidently shared by most strata of the Qin society.

Political Perspective: Qin as a Nation-State?

The above discussion has shown that the demise of the aristocratic social order in the state of Qin in the mid-Zhanguo period, and the parallel abandonment of the Zhou ritual system, coincide with the development of a distinct local identity and of a new international image of Qin. Yet as our analysis suggests, Qin leaders of the reform age and thereafter did not try to break away entirely from the Zhou legacy, and it is unlikely that they had ever planned to disaffiliate themselves from the rest of the Zhou world. Was then the emergence of a nascent Qin identity a by-product of the reforms or a result of conscious manipulation by the Qin leaders? Why did the process of formation of unique "Qin-ness" occur? And what role did this identity formation play in the consolidation of Qin's power and the formation of the Qin empire?

Addressing the above questions is crucial in our effort to better understand the negotiation, construction, and manipulation of new identity. We may propose a threefold answer to these questions. First, we should consider the impact of the demise of the hereditary aristocracy, the major source of cultural homogeneity in the Zhou world. The nobles who ruled Zhou states prior to the fourth century B.C. formed a hereditary stratum, effectively closed to outsiders, a stratum that possessed many cultural characteristics common throughout the Zhou world. Aristocrats from different states routinely intermarried (but never married the commoners of their own state), they shared a common ritual and textual culture, they spoke a mutually intelligible language, and routinely communicated during the inter-state meetings. Frequent inter-state and intra-state conflicts did not diminish the sense of belonging to the common culturally unified tianxia (Pines 2002c). The hereditary ruling strata perpetuated cultural links throughout the Zhou world long after the demise of the ephemeral unity of the Western Zhou (西周, 1045–771 B.C.) age.

The rule of hereditary aristocracy effectively came to an end during a period of profound political and social reforms of the fifth–fourth centuries B.C. Nowhere was this process as rapid and as thorough as in the state of Qin. The profound changes in mortuary practices observed above are but a partial manifestation of the overall transformation of Qin's social structure. The abolition of hereditary aristocracy and the establishment of a new meritocratic elite, in which ranks were granted for military achievements and high tax yields, blurred the differences between the lower and upper strata of the populace. By the late Zhanguo period Qin achieved remarkable social mobility, as reflected, for instance, in the Almanacs (*Ri shu* 日書) discovered at Shuihudi and at Fangmatan 放馬灘, Gansu, which show an impressive range of career opportunities for a newborn Qin baby (Ri Shu yanjiu ban 2000). The new, popular-based elite came into existence.

The opening of upward mobility routes for commoners had a far-reaching impact on the cultural life of Qin society. The old aristocratic culture, with its roots in the Zhou past, did not disappear entirely, but it was partly submerged by the popular culture which was based on local habits, customs, and beliefs. The changes in Qin mortuary rites surveyed above suggest the ongoing influence of local customs and popular beliefs, an influence which intensified during the fourth century B.C. These are not the only manifestations of the upward dissemination of popular customs. Almanacs, exorcist, and resurrection texts unearthed in late Zhanguo Qin tombs at Shuihudi and Fangmatan all reflect heretofore largely unknown beliefs of the lower strata; these beliefs might have existed for centuries, but their written codification and their presence in the officials' graves reflect a partial merging of elite and popular culture. The impact of lower-strata habits on the new elite culture may explain many of the late Zhanguo cultural changes in the state of Qin, and maybe among its neighbors as well (von Falkenhausen n.d.).

The second major factor that contributed toward the consolidation of Qin (and other states') society was the emergence of the tightly organized Warring State (Hsu 1965; Lewis 1999; Yang 1998). The new state, which sought to mobilize all its population for economic production and warfare, established effective control mechanisms over individuals, and penetrated deeply into society, eliminating or weakening formerly semi-independent units such as the high-ordered lineage or the agricultural commune (Perelomov 1961:66–84), and diminishing thereby former parochial identities. The new state was a highly centralized polity with fixed boundaries, which were often marked by long protective walls. This territorial integration was accompanied by a clear bureaucratic distinction between “us” and “others;” thus, Qin statues clearly distinguish between the native population (*gu Qin min* 故秦民), people from various dependencies, and the subjects of foreign powers who had the status of a guest (*ke* 客 or *bang ke* 邦客). The Shuihudi documents suggest that descent as well as place of birth played an important role in defining belonging to Qin (Hulsewe 1985:171; Shuihudi 2001:135). While speaking of citizenship would certainly be an anachronism, there are undeniable common aspects of Qin in the period of the Warring States and the modern nation-state.

The third, and perhaps the most important, development that had far-reaching impact on the sense of identity of the Qin populace was the appearance of mass conscription. The transformation of the Zhanguo military contributed decisively to the consolidation of the inhabitants of Qin. Prolonged military service, frequent bloody conflicts with rival armies, violent conquest of the neighboring territories and inevitable confrontations between the occupied and the occupiers – all these could not but enhance the sense of common identity among Qin peasant-soldiers (cf. Smith 1981). Widespread hatred of Qin, which is richly documented both in traditional and in recently discovered texts (Pines In press), further fuelled feelings of common destiny among Qin conscripts. The above-mentioned belief of Qin enemies that this state was a singular enemy of the civilized tianxia became by itself a powerful means of consolidating the unique Qin identity, political, as well as cultural. Is it possible that during the 3rd century B.C. something akin to modern con-

cepts of ethnic identity and patriotism emerged in Qin only to be abandoned with imperial unification?

The above discussion raises the issue of ideology (in the most general sense) and its role in the formation and consolidation of state authority. This is a controversial issue among archaeologists and anthropologists: was the ideology a by-product of the sociopolitical change? Did it serve as “smoke and mirrors,” an elite fabrication designed to naturalize their favorable position and disguise their exploitative actions? Is it merely a post-factum invention by modern scholars? Or was it an active force which determined the local trajectory of sociopolitical change and the type of state apparatuses which emerged from it?

Materialistic views are strongly entrenched in Western anthropological thought and, if only because the type of data we use, are embedded even more strongly in archaeological theory (Tainter 1988; cf. Earle 1991; Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978; Gilman 1996.) Many archaeologists today would like to see ideology becoming a more independent variable (Shelach 1999:25–30; Yoffee and Sherratt 1993) or at least more fully integrated with other variables (Demarest 1992). As pointed out by De Marrais and her colleagues, the crucial issue is that of “materialization” or, in their words, “the transformation of ideas, values, stories, myths, and the like into a physical reality – a ceremonial event, a symbolic object, a monument or a writing system” (De Marrais et al. 1996:16). However, even with this theoretical framework in mind archaeologists often face situations where without tangible written sources they tend to depend on speculations and subjective interpretations of the archaeological data. We believe that the unique case of Qin, where ideological changes are reflected in the material culture and can be juxtaposed against the written record, is potentially an important source for inter-cultural comparison.

While from the description above it may be supposed that local identity was merely a by-product of political change, we assume that ideology played more than just a passive role in the process. The initial development of elite ideology and exclusive high culture during the Shang period, especially during the Western Zhou, and its maintenance and manipulation by the aristocratic elite, in Qin and in other states, particularly during the Chunqiu period, is akin to the model proposed by Baines and Yoffee (1998). This model, while not without similarities to earlier “exploitative” models, sees the ideology of the dominant elite (expressed in religion, cosmology, prestige items, and art) as an integral part of the development and maintenance of the state rather than one of its by-products.

The emergence on the public scene, as gathered from archaeological, epigraphic, and textual perspectives, of the lower strata and their culture, and the development of a more heterogeneous system, a process not accounted for by the “high culture” model of Baines and Yoffee, should also be seen as an integral part of the sociopolitical process. The new culture was a result of constant negotiation and compromise between the earlier, aristocratic “high culture” and the newly emerging “popular culture.” The elite became increasingly open to the lower strata impact, was adopting and adapting itself to the commoners’ beliefs, manipulating them to its needs. For instance, the commoners’ increasing estrangement from the inhabi-

tants of other states became a useful military asset. Coercion was evidently insufficient to mobilize large peasant armies for a life-or-death struggle. *Pace* Gilman (1996:57), the elite domination over the commoners during the Zhanguo period could not be taken for granted, particularly on the battlefield, when the costs of compliance were immense and the temptation to escape high. Many Zhanguo thinkers and military specialists repeatedly addressed the issue of how to encourage the commoners to fight and how to prevent them from absconding from the field of battle. Clearly, stronger local identity (not to use the too-modern term patriotism), shared by all social strata, increases social cohesion and the motivation of the common people to fight for their state. Moreover, opposing this local identity to that of the enemy reduces the likelihood of defection. It is likely that Zhanguo statesmen were aware of this and manipulated local identity when necessary.

Such a perspective can explain the strong visibility of local cultural traits in the archaeological record of the Zhanguo period. Presumably such traits, like the catacomb tombs of Qin, were not invented *de novo*. More likely, local traits which until this period were submerged under the standard Zhou elite culture were elevated and given expression in order to emphasize local uniqueness. A similar phenomenon is found in other states as well. In Chu 楚, Qin's strongest adversary, it is only during this period that the so-called "southern culture" traits, such as shamanistic religion and depictions of mythological creatures, become archaeologically visible (So 1999; Wu 1999; Xu 1999).

The fact that attributes of these local cultures are most visible in graves of the elite is suggestive. We can argue that once the Qin elite abandoned its claim for legitimacy based on the old Zhou tradition, it actively sought legitimization in the local culture. A complementary process can thus be imagined: local identity was developed from below but it was also re-invented (or re-cast) by the elite to serve its needs for cohesion and legitimization. Rather than viewing ideology and its expression in material culture as a result of elite manipulations (De Marrais et al. 1996), what we see is a kind of ideological dialogue between the sociopolitical strata. Our ability to identify in the archaeological record processes of social negotiation and the participation of lower social strata is also an important issue for archaeologists in other parts of the world (Joyce et al. 2001:345; Pauketat 2000; Van Buren and Richards 2000:10). Further research and analysis of archaeological data related to the Qin state will contribute to a better understanding of this issue. While our data allows only observation of general patterns, in the future more careful excavations and detailed reports may allow for thorough analysis of individual cases and lead to a better understanding of the construction and manipulation of group identities (Fisher and DiPaolo-Loren 2003).

Ideology, the Transmission of Cultural Legacy and Interaction: Concluding Remarks and Theoretical Perspectives

Our discussion thus far may be surprising in light of the well-known historical fact that Qin did not establish a separate entity but became the unifier of All under

Heaven. The apparent contradiction between the processes depicted above and the course of Qin history can be resolved, however, if we take into account that the process of identity-building in the Zhanguo world was extremely complex. Individuals and even groups always have more than a single identity, with different identities that are constructed and recombined, and may overlap or even contradict each other (Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995; Fisher and DiPaolo-Loren 2003; Meskell 2002). In the case of the political self-image of the Qin, tendencies for political and cultural fragmentation were counterbalanced by integrative forces. Among these we may mention economic integration, promulgated by the commercialization of economy and increasing regional interdependence; general fluidity of the boundaries due to frequent conquests and annexations of enemy territory; and, of course, the common cultural legacy of the Zhou, which was never rejected in its entirety, even when some of its aspects were modified or abandoned. The religious factor may also have served as a consolidating force, if, as von Falkenhausen (2004) observes, Qin had spearheaded a new wave of religious beliefs throughout the Zhou world. But perhaps the uniquely important integrative force was the behavior of the educated elite. In sharp distinction from the modern European nation-state practice, Zhanguo statesmen did not develop a sense of “patriotism.” Most of the outstanding thinkers, statesmen, and military specialists considered All under Heaven as a huge market of talents, frequently shifting their allegiance from one court to another in exchange for respect, fame, or for more material benefits (Pines 2002b). Instead of promulgating local identity, many leading Zhanguo intellectuals proudly proclaimed themselves “Heaven’s subjects” (*tian min* 天民), whose goal was to serve All under Heaven and not the individual state (Mengzi 1992 13.19:308).

“Heaven’s subjects” became the most outspoken proponents of political unification of All under Heaven. Qin rulers, like their peers elsewhere, were committed to the goal of unification, and this is a major reason why they never acted decisively to establish a separate Qin identity. In the final account, their field of operation was the entire Zhou realm, not a single state (Pines 2000). Indeed, immediately after conquering eastern states, Qin rulers did their best to create a new synthetic identity, which blended Qin indigenous traits with the local traditions and beliefs of the conquered (Li Ling 2001). The common cultural heritage of the pre-Zhanguo age served again as an important consolidating factor, which may explain the conscious appeal to the patterns of the past in Qin stele inscriptions, the hallmark of imperial propaganda (Kern 2000).

This adaptation of the Zhou legacy to the needs of the newly unified empire is, of course, not unique to Qin. How the legacy of previous periods of political unity was transmitted during times of disintegration and how it was manipulated and recast by the new political actors is a question relevant to many areas of the world (e.g. Baines and Yoffee 1998:252–9; Brumfiel 2000:134; Van Buren 2000). The example of Qin is compelling because it fully embodied the complexity of such processes. Although during the period addressed above the political system changed dramatically, new social strata emerged and new value systems were developed, the legacy of the Zhou – and to a lesser extent of the Shang – has not vanished. Aside from the ideological appeal to a bygone “golden age” (an appeal rejected by the

Qin imperial rulers but which resurfaced during the subsequent dynasty, the Han), many substantive aspects of the Zhou legacy were adopted into the imperial culture. Even the material culture of the Zhou, the hallmark of its “high culture,” did not disappear with the demise of the social strata which formulated and used it. For example, throughout the imperial period, bronze ritual vessels, the ultimate material expression of the Zhou, were used in state and religious ceremonies. In form – but not in their decoration – those vessels differ little from their Zhou models. The employment of such bronze vessels in state ceremonies is also reminiscent of their original use even if the ideology embedded in these vessels differed markedly from that of the Zhou age. Such examples are ubiquitous. The more subtle understanding of transmission and change gained from our research of the Qin can, we hope, stimulate similar studies by archaeologists and historians elsewhere in the world.

Interaction among polities has long been at the center of the theoretical discussion of the development of social complexity as a project at times contiguous to the construction of the state (e.g. Renfrew 1986). This approach has attracted some interest among scholars working on similar issues in China (e.g. Chang 1989; Keightley 1983; Shelach 2001) and in other areas of East Asia (e.g. Barnes 1986). We believe that this perspective is crucial for understanding the development of Qin, and of other early Chinese polities. The rise of Qin to power can be seen as an example of a peer-polity process (Renfrew 1986). Changes in Qin (and presumably in other Zhou states) took place in the broader regional context of a shared cultural foundation and political aspirations. Change in the Zhou tradition and even transgressions of it never happened in a vacuum. Qin reacted to developments in other states and affected them in turn. Though this is by no means a new concept, peer-polity can serve as a good framework for the analysis of long-term sociopolitical processes in East Asia, for it allows us to advance beyond traditional concepts which see, for example, the development of states in the Korean peninsula and Japan as merely a secondary manifestation of Chinese culture (Barnes 1986) or labeling Qin as a “barbarian” or rogue state. In both cases the peer-polity framework allows us to look at different socio-geographical dimensions, such as inter-regional elite spheres (competition as well as emulation and even cooperation), and local interaction among sociopolitical strata. However, if our goal is to use the East Asian data to develop new models of state formation and of state structure (Morrison 1994) we must be more open to integrate current methods and theoretical approaches in our research. For our particular case study we found issues that address the transformation of ideology into material culture and the way such “materialized” ideas are manipulated most revealing (Baines and Yoffee 1998; De Marrais et al. 1996; Fisher and DiPaolo-Loren 2003). Awareness of such issues will, it is hoped, lead archaeologists working in East Asia to look for new kind of data, for example data related to the human body and to personal adornments, which will allow for more systematic analysis of changing identities (Fisher and DiPaolo-Loren 2003).

In his discussion of the ideology of pre-Columbian societies of the south-central Andes, Kolata (1992:84) identified two models of states: coercive and integrative.

These models are surprisingly close to the traditional explanation of the Qin “paradox:” a state that was able, through the unrestricted use of coercion, to conquer the entire “Chinese” world in a short period of time, and then immediately disintegrated. However, our analysis suggests that prior to unification Qin’s achievements were not based on pure coercion but also on ideological integration of its populace. After unification the Qin rulers attempted an even larger ideological integration of “all under Heaven,” but with limited success. Qin rulers’ skillful presentation of their state as the ultimate outsider perfectly served their goal of internal consolidation before unification, but became a great impediment thereafter. In any case it is clear that Qin never substituted naked force for ideological manipulations, although the latter were not as successful as post-unification Qin rulers might have hoped.

Ethnic identity and its archaeological manifestations is another general issue that is relevant to archaeological research in many parts of the world (Jones 1997; Meskell 2002:285–7). In his paper on the mortuary practices of the Qin, von Falkenhausen (2004) argues that “the defining features of the Qin “system” were religious ideas that were not essentially linked to ethnic identity or political affiliation.” The gist of the argument is that because features that many archaeologists associate with the Qin culture, such as catacomb tombs and flexed burials, are also found outside the political boundaries of the Qin, they are poor ethnic or political markers. We have been making a different, even opposite point – that inter-state interactions are an essential part of creating, recreating, and redefining of what may be called ethnic identity during this period, and that therefore boundary crossing can be a defining aspect of a state’s cultural identity and should be expected. For it was precisely when Qin was re-imagined as a barbarian outsider that it also borrowed extensively from the culture of its neighbors. For example, the common practice of rulers and high nobility in states to the east to mark their grave with imposing tumuli was probably adopted by Qin rulers only during the last decades of the fourth century B.C. (Wu 1999:716). Similar trends are seen, as discussed above, in the introduction from the east of new types of public buildings and new esthetic norms.

Our approach to ethnic identity fits well with Jones’ (1997:84–105) multidimensional model. However, such a model, because it combines many different aspects that may also represent other types of identity, is necessarily vague (Meskell 2002:286). As pointed out by Ucko (1989:xvi) “there is no necessary one-to-one correlation between material culture and language or art style, nor between either of the former and what a living group may consider the extent of its own culture.” Based on our analysis of the Qin data, we suggest that archaeological manifestations of ethnic identity in this type of situation should be seen as quantitative and not qualitative property. In other words, we should not look for the presence or absence of any specific trait in a region but at the prevalence of such traits and their combination with other cultural features. Such an approach has been discussed by Shennan (1989) and we hope that the Qin case, with its unique combination of written and material data, will continue inspire a more thorough approach to the study of ethnic identities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to Lothar von Falkenhausen and Teng Mingyu who generously shared with us their published and unpublished materials and made insightful comments on earlier versions of this paper. We have also benefited from the comments by Martin Kern, Miriam Stark, and the volume reviewers.

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